



## NOW from NORTH AMERICA



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5 December is World Soil Day: Be the Solution to Soil Pollution

### In this Issue:

- Migration and Rural Development
- Be the Solution to Soil Pollution
- 2nd World Food Day Poem
- Partner Corner: Better World Campaign
- Tax Corner
- Upcoming Events
- FAO Global Highlights
- Latest Publications

“The impacts of climate change on the agricultural sectors are undermining our efforts to provide food security and adequate nutrition for all. In fact, climate extremes such as prolonged droughts are threatening to erode and even reverse gains made in ending hunger over the last decades.”

**José Graziano da Silva,  
Director-General of FAO**

first International Symposium  
on Agricultural Innovation for  
Family Farmers

21 November 2018

### FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Dear Readers,

This year in many ways reaffirmed that we have to fast track and scale up our actions to build sustainable and resilient food systems in order to end hunger and malnutrition by 2030. With global hunger levels rising for the third consecutive year - reaching 821 million - achieving the Sustainable Development Goals will require a transformational change. Climate change and conflicts are key contributors to the growing trend of hunger. We all have to work together to address the root causes of these 21st century challenges. The UN Secretary General's remarks, while meeting with Directors of DC based UN offices in mid-November, emphasized the need for all stakeholders to join hands and work for a poverty and hunger-free world.

This November, FAO North America and Global CSIS Food Security project convened a roundtable discussion on FAO's 2018 State of Food and Agriculture report, which examined the linkages between agriculture, migration and rural development. We also co-hosted a roundtable with The Nature Conservancy on the importance of soil health for food security in advance of World Soil Day.

In December, we will explore the application of blockchains for food safety and traceability in collaboration with Global CSIS Food Security Project featuring speakers from IBM and FAO. A congressional briefing in collaboration with Alliance Against Hunger and the office of Congressman Jeff Fortenberry, will look at “Getting Back on Track: U.S. Priorities to Reach Zero Hunger Globally.” Another roundtable cohosted with EcoAgriculture Partners will discuss how to scale up climate smart agriculture in the United States.

We would further like to extend our grateful appreciation for all of your support for World Food Day with [this video](#). I wish you a restful holiday and Happy New Year!

**Vimlendra Sharan**  
Director, FAO Liaison Office for North America

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM NORTH AMERICA

### Maximizing the Impacts of Migration for Rural Development



From left to right: Kimberly Flowers (CSIS); Rob Vos (IFPRI); Kanta Kumari Rigaud (World Bank); and Michael Bulwaka (Embassy of Uganda).

8 November 2018, Washington, DC - FAO North America and CSIS Global Food Security Project hosted a discussion on the linkages between migration, agriculture and rural development, based on the [latest State of Food and Agriculture \(SOFA 2018\) report](#), which focuses on this very topic.

"Migration has been a driver for development throughout history," said Vimlendra Sharan, Director of FAO North America in his opening remarks. He noted, counterintuitive to many assumptions and opinions about migration, that developing countries host 85% of international refugees, and that the majority of international migration occurs between developing countries.

A distinguished panel with representatives from UNHCR, IFPRI, the World Bank, and the Embassy of Uganda further explored perspectives on migration and rural development in a discussion moderated by Kimberly Flowers, Director of Humanitarian Agenda and the Global Food Security Project, CSIS.

Matthew Reynolds, Regional Representative for the U.S. and the Caribbean at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), accentuated that today's conflicts are more complex and involve more actors than in the past. Malnutrition and food insecurity is common in different crises around the world.

Rob Vos, Director of IFPRI's Markets, Trade, and Institutions Division, stressed that the report brings a refreshing perspective on migration as a driver of development. The U.S. economy stands to lose from restricting migration, as migrants' productive capacity gets lost, he added.

Kanta Kumari Rigaud, Lead Environmental Specialist at the World Bank, stressed that climate change is a main driver of forced migration, and will force millions of people to migrate in the future. It is key to handle the current crises and adjust to the new megatrends such as urbanization.

Michael Bulwaka, First Secretary at the Embassy of the Republic of Uganda in Washington, DC, underscored that climate change impacts such as droughts and changes in rainy seasons, as well as conflicts are key drivers behind migration in East Africa. Uganda's Refugee Act of 2006 ensures that refugees are registered, allotted land for settlements and agriculture, and have access to local services such as schools and health services in order to assist refugees transition.

The event concluded that policies should aim to maximize the positive impacts that result from migration while minimizing the negative ones.

[Read the full story](#)

### Be the Solution to Soil Pollution



FAO's Natalia Rodriguez Eugenio joining the discussion from FAO headquarters in Rome.

28 November 2018, Washington, DC – In recognition of World Soil Day, observed on 5 December, FAO North America and The Nature Conservancy convened a roundtable discussion on the importance of promoting soil health to ensure global food and nutrition security.

Vimlendra Sharan, Director of FAO North America, opened the discussion with the staggering fact that one-third of global soils are already degraded. "Achieving zero hunger will require an increase in food production, which will require healthy soils," said Sharan.

Natalia Rodriguez Eugenio, Soil Scientist and Soil Pollution Expert from the Global Soil Partnership in FAO's Land and Water Division, provided a keynote address virtually from Rome. Eugenio emphasized the importance of soils for ecosystems services vital for human wellbeing, supporting biodiversity, and providing the largest terrestrial carbon sequestration. "Pollution is one of the largest threats to soil health. Once contaminants move into soil, they can also enter the food chain, affecting our health," she said.

In May 2018, FAO co-hosted the Global Symposium on Soil Pollution, which was the first step in implementing the [Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Soil Management](#) to prevent and reduce harmful substances from entering the soil as a way to maintain healthy soils and food safety. FAO is currently working on a report for the third session of the UN Environment Assembly on the extent and future trends of soil pollution, risks and impacts on health, and a technical guide to implement the Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Soil Management.

A panel discussion moderated by Roger Thurow, Senior Fellow at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, highlighted the complexity in managing soil pollution. The Nature Conservancy's Ginya Truitt Nakata, Lands Director for Latin America, emphasized the important role surrounding habitats play in soil productivity. Pipa Elias, Soil Health Strategy Manager for North America highlighted The Nature Conservancy's goal of getting 50% of U.S. cropland managed with healthy soil practices, compared to the current 10%. Jeff Seale, Agriculture Environmental Strategy Lead, Bayer4Crops noted that climate smart practices and technology can improve soil health; however the biggest barrier is cost. Dr. Paul West of the University of Minnesota's Institute on the Environment, further distinguished that agriculture occupies 40% of all land on earth, and that 70% of our calories come from only four crops (wheat, rice, maize and soy), noting that we need to look at how we use what we grow.

A dynamic conversation followed the panel discussion emphasizing the need for greater actions, incentives and programs to reduce and prevent contaminants from entering the soil. [Read more about World Soil Day](#)

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM NORTH AMERICA

### United Nations Secretary-General Meets UN Agencies in Washington, DC



13 November 2018, Washington, DC - United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres met with the heads of UN agencies based in Washington, DC at the UN Information Center. He urged the Directors to push-on and work diligently towards the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

### World Food Day Poetry Contest - Second Place

FAO North America in partnership with Poetry X Hunger hosted the first of its kind World Food Day Poetry Contest. This section will feature the winning poems. This month, we are featuring the second place winner Jesse Alexander's poem "Hunger #1". [Learn more about the poetry contest.](#)

#### Hunger #1

hides with you after 1am (btwn guard shifts)  
trying to doze in backseat of your mom's old blue CR-V  
(good sleeping car, she said,  
rear seats fold down,  
her goodbye factory hands pressing your cheeks)

parked under sodium light in the back of the chemistry building lot  
next to the dumpster (with half-eaten mcdonalds other students threw out)

sneak into your dormroom (almost pranklike)  
when momma's check runs out  
before the end of the month midway into the semester  
demanding choices (am selfish):  
study me instead of physics  
nurse me instead of biology  
pay me your undivided attention  
cross your arms over your growling stomach  
curl up  
try to close your eyes  
and wait for morning.

By Jesse Alexander  
Clinton, MD

**Judges' Comments** – *This poem felt deeply personal and several of the references tugged at my heartstrings and memories, and it still really carried the larger picture of raising hunger awareness, without losing the specific imagery and personal touch. How do you tell an entire story in a line? This poem told many. Hunger -- it's that pair of dangling parentheses.*

Judges: Carla Christopher and Kim Baker

### Partner Corner:

#### Better World Campaign

In this section, FAO's Liaison Office for North America invites a different partner organization each month to comment on how the partnership has benefitted both organizations.



The Better World Campaign fosters a strong partnership between the United States and the United Nations that promotes core American interests and builds a more secure, prosperous, and healthy world. In pursuit of that mission, BWC engages directly with the U.S. Congress, the White House, NGOs, the media, the American public, and other key audiences and stakeholders to encourage U.S. leadership that helps ensure the UN has the resources and oversight it needs to carry out its invaluable, lifesaving work.

To achieve that, BWC partners with a long list of UN agencies, funds, and programs to help highlight their successes and challenges and educate policymakers about how UN humanitarian, development, and peace operations help achieve the U.S.'s own national security and foreign policy goals. BWC was extremely pleased to do just that on World Food Day 2018 by collaborating with FAO's Liaison Office for North America and leveraging our over 400,000 grassroots advocates to help bring attention on Capitol Hill to the critical work FAO does every day to end world hunger.

Website: [betterworldcampaign.org](http://betterworldcampaign.org)

Twitter: @BetterWorldOrg

Facebook: @betterworldcampaign



## HIGHLIGHTS FROM NORTH AMERICA

### EVENTS THIS MONTH

What	When	Where	Register
<b>The Future of Food Safety and Traceability? Blockchain Applications in Food and Agriculture</b>	Tuesday, 4 December	CSIS Headquarters 1616 Rhode Island Avenue, NW Washington, DC	<a href="#">By invitation only</a>
<b>Getting Back on Track: U.S. Policy Priorities to Reach Zero Hunger Globally</b>	Thursday, 6 December 8:45 am - 10:00 am (EST)	United States Capitol Building, Washington, DC	<a href="#">Register</a>
<b>Agricultural Landscapes &amp; Climate Change in the US: Recent Policy and Program Developments</b>	Thursday, 13 December 8:30 - 11:00 am (EST)	FAO North America, 2121 K Street, Suite 800B, Washington, DC	<a href="#">Register</a>

### TAX CORNER

This section provides important updates from the tax unit located at the FAO Liaison Office for North America, which processes tax reimbursement requests by FAO, World Food Programme (WFP), and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) staff members.

Note to all US Income Taxpayers: the season to file your tax return electronically with the IRS ended as of 18 November 2018 (<https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/irs-warns-of-tax-transcript-email-scam-dangers-to-business-networks>).

If you have not filed your tax return, you must send the originally signed tax return to the IRS via the US Postal Service (or any of the private delivery companies – as long as it is sent to a physical address – these companies cannot deliver to P.O. Boxes). To find out where to send your tax return, go to <https://www.irs.gov/filing/where-to-file-paper-tax-returns-with-or-without-a-payment>.

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The IRS is warning the public re: a surge of fraudulent emails impersonating the IRS and using tax transcripts as bait to entice users to open documents containing malware that takes weeks or even months to remove.

The scam masquerades as the IRS, which can have an attachment labeled “Tax Account Transcript” or something similar, and the subject line uses some variation of the phrase “tax transcript.”

The IRS does not send unsolicited emails to the public, nor would it email a sensitive document such as a tax transcript which has very sensitive and confidential taxpayer information. The IRS urges taxpayers not to open the email or the attachment. If using a personal computer, delete or forward the scam email to [phishing@irs.gov](mailto:phishing@irs.gov) and/or to the taxpayers’ employer’s IT Department.

## FAO GLOBAL HIGHLIGHTS

### World Cannot Standby Watching Yemen's Human Tragedy



6 November 2018, New York - The international community is failing to end hunger, evidenced by the tragic crisis in Yemen, the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) José Graziano da Silva told a high-level briefing on food insecurity to Member States at the United Nations in New York. "Yemen is living proof of an apocalyptic equation: conflicts and food security go hand in hand, and when there is an overlap of climate change and conflict, famine is already on the horizon," he said. The briefing by FAO, WFP and IFAD focused on the causes and implications of the recent rise in global hunger, and efforts needed to put the Sustainable Development Goal of Zero Hunger back on track.

[Read the full Story](#)

### FAO - IFPRI Urge Nations to End Hunger and Malnutrition

28 November 2018, Bangkok, Thailand - With rising levels of global hunger putting the goal of ending malnutrition in all its forms by 2030 in serious jeopardy, FAO and IFPRI organized a global conference aimed at urgently accelerating efforts to achieve Zero Hunger worldwide. The rise in global hunger is witnessed alongside an increase in obesity, which brings with it an entirely different set of health and economic challenges for the world now and in the future. The conference, attracting delegates primarily from Africa and Asia provided a platform to accelerate the sharing of existing specialty knowledge, approaches and tools that have led to success in many countries so others can learn, adapt, and accelerate their own work to reduce hunger and malnutrition in sustainable ways. [Learn more](#)

### AG Innovation Vital to Address Emerging Challenges

21-23 November 2018, Rome – Rapid advances in agricultural innovation that address climate change and support family farmers are crucial if the Sustainable Development Goals are to be achieved, FAO's Director-General stated during the opening session of the first [International Symposium on Agricultural Innovation for Family Farmers](#). Family farmers represent nearly 800 million people and have long been agricultural entrepreneurs and innovators. They manage about 75% of the world's agricultural land and produce about 80% of the world's food. Fostering their capacity to innovate is especially crucial today to meet the future food demands from a projected population of nearly 10 billion people in 2050, in the context of a changing climate. Going beyond apps, drones, or farm machinery, innovation in agriculture involves different social, organizational, or institutional processes, ranging from access to markets, credit, or extension services to marketing produce in a new way. FAO is also testing blockchain applications for food chain optimization, traceability, enforcement of rights, and improving financial transaction processes, and is working with the private sector, such as Google, Telefonica de España, Unilever, and others.

[Read the full story](#) and the [Chair's Summary](#)

### Strengthening Indigenous Food Systems For Zero Hunger



9 November 2018, Rome - Indigenous Food systems and indigenous traditional knowledge have survived hundreds and sometimes thousands of years, therefore they may have some of the answers we are looking for, FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva said. Co-organized by FAO, UNESCO, UNPFII, FILAC and DOCIP, the expert seminar was an opportunity to exchange knowledge as key contribution to the global debate on sustainability and climate resilience in the context of the 2030 Agenda and the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition. Seventy panelists coming from indigenous communities and organizations; universities; research centers and more than 180 attendees and 49 countries, exchanged their expertise and knowledge on indigenous food systems. [Read the full story](#)

### World Antibiotic Awareness Week Calls on Farmers to Boost Farm Hygiene

14 November 2018, Rome - Farmers have a vital role to play in stemming the spread of antimicrobial resistance among disease-causing pathogens, and can make a significant contribution simply by adopting good hygiene practices during their day-to-day farm operations. Life-saving antimicrobial medicines are sometimes added routinely to feed, even when animals are already healthy, to try to stave off infections and fatten animals faster. One person dies every minute from a drug-resistant infection, and without global action, this number will only rise. By 2050, the growing AMR threat will cost the global economy an estimated \$6 trillion dollars every year. FAO is working around the globe to help governments, agricultural and animal health authorities, and livestock producers build their capacity to address AMR, with strong support from USAID, among others. [Read more](#)

### Call for Nominations for Innovation Award

FAO and the Government of Switzerland are calling on individuals, private companies or institutions to submit a nomination for one of the following categories before **28 February 2019**.

- **Award for Digitalization and Innovation for Sustainable Food Systems** (USD 40 000) - Innovations that impact more than one level of supply chain and strengthen the link between farmers and consumers
- **Award for Innovations that empower youth in agriculture and food systems** (USD 20 000) - Innovations that empower youth (under 35) in agriculture and food systems

We want to hear how your innovation is contributing to the global effort to reach Zero Hunger. Download the nomination form, terms and conditions [here](#).

## LATEST PUBLICATIONS

### HARNESSING THE POWER OF INNOVATION IN AGRICULTURE

Innovation holds the potential to unlock employment opportunities, empower youth and women to access information, technology and markets, and scale up new solutions to global challenges to food and agriculture.

[Read the collection of key resources on agricultural innovation](#)

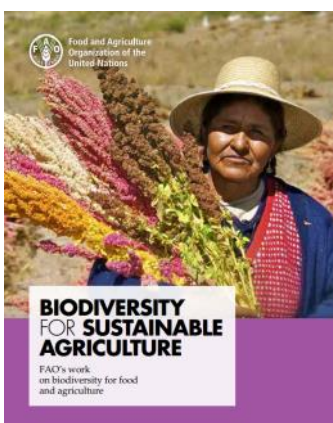
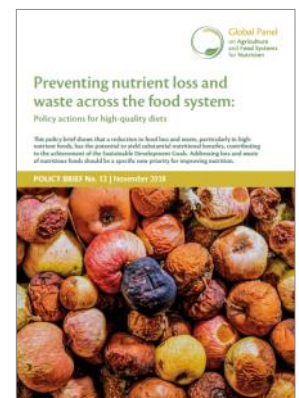


### 2018 GLOBAL NUTRITION REPORT

This year's Global Nutrition Report shows advances in policy and actions, commitments and financing, and data collection and analysis, while also highlighting the immense challenge of tackling malnutrition in all its forms. The past five years have seen some gradual but welcome progress on nutrition. [Read full report](#)

### PREVENTING NUTRIENT LOSS AND WASTE ACROSS THE FOOD SYSTEM: POLICY ACTIONS FOR HIGH-QUALITY DIETS

This policy brief shows that a reduction in food loss and waste, particularly in high nutrient foods, has the potential to yield substantial nutritional benefits, contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Addressing loss and waste of nutritious foods should be a specific new priority for improving nutrition. [Read policy brief](#)

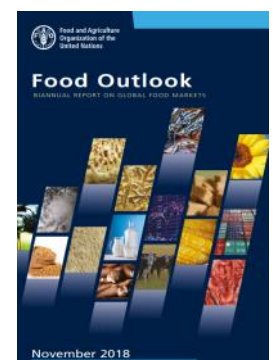


### BIODIVERSITY FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

There is growing recognition that safeguarding biodiversity and managing natural resources sustainably must be a priority in national plans if we are to deliver nutritious food for present and future generations and achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. [FAO's work on biodiversity for food and agriculture](#)

### FOOD OUTLOOK: REPORT ON GLOBAL FOOD MARKETS

Declining international agricultural commodity prices should ease the bill the world's poorest countries pay for food imports, although the strengthening U.S. dollar poses "serious concerns", a new United Nations report says. Worldwide food imports are likely to reach USD \$1.467 trillion in 2018, 3% above the previous year's level but slightly down from the July forecast, according to the Food Outlook, a semiannual FAO publication. [Read report](#)



## FAO AND THE UNITED STATES & CANADA

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has deep roots in North America. The Organization was conceived of during a meeting in Hot Springs, Virginia, United States in 1943 and its first headquarters was located in Washington, DC. In 1945, FAO was formally established as a specialized agency by the newly created United Nations during its very first session, which was held in Quebec City, Canada. FAO's headquarters was permanently moved to Rome, Italy in 1951. The FAO Liaison Office for North America, based in Washington, DC, continues to strengthen the Organization's partnership with Canada and the United States.

FAO shares with Canada and the United States a vision of how to achieve a world without hunger and poverty. Both member states have been working closely with FAO since its inception more than 70 years ago. Canada and the United States both play critically important leadership roles within FAO and they are also among the Organization's largest financial supporters.

FAO's Liaison Office for North America works to support and implement FAO policies and programs through strategic partnerships with governments and other key stakeholders based in Canada and the United States, including civil society organizations, multilateral institutions, research centers and think tanks, the private sector, philanthropic foundations, and the media.

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